



Sunday, December 24, 2023
Fourth Sunday in Advent

And Mary said,

I'm bursting with God-news;
I'm dancing the song of my Savior God.
God took one good look at me, and look what happened—
I'm the most fortunate woman on earth!
What God has done for me will never be forgotten,
the God whose very name is holy, set apart from all others.
His mercy flows in wave after wave
on those who are in awe before him.
He bared his arm and showed his strength,
scattered the bluffing braggarts.
He knocked tyrants off their high horses,
pulled victims out of the mud.
The starving poor sat down to a banquet;
the callous rich were left out in the cold.
He embraced his chosen child, Israel;
he remembered and piled on the mercies, piled them high.
It's exactly what he promised,
beginning with Abraham and right up to now.

- *CONNECTING YOU WITH CHRIST AND COMMUNITY* -

Greeters: Margie & Dave Stumpf, Amy & Adam Kane, Kathy & Doug Hengst, Anita & Larry Ewing

Ushers: Rita Simmers, Crispina Giliberti, Linda Keener, Joyce Shaffer, Sara Shank, John Wolfe, David & Marion Drain

Childcare is available for children ages three and under for this service. Older children may enjoy the special bulletins provided for them in the Narthex. Activity bags are also available in the nursery.

Gathering in God's Name

Chimes

Prelude

Welcome & Ministry Highlights

Rev. Allison Beaulieu

Please sign and pass the "Friendship Pad" down the pew.

At the end of the row, pass it back so that we can greet one another by name after the service.

Lighting of the Advent Candle

Peter, Nancy & Jimmy Kiiru

* Call to Worship

Rev. Allison Beaulieu

Leader: How does a weary world rejoice?

People: We sing songs of hope. We allow hope to change us, to strengthen us. We tell the stories of what could be. We listen for God's Word. We resist the temptation to give up or give in. We remember Mary's song. We gather for worship. We hope. Against all odds, we hope.

Leader: Friends, this is the day that the Lord is making – full of Hope!

All: Let us worship holy God.

* Opening Hymn #28

"Good Christian Friends, Rejoice"

Proclaiming God's Word

Call to Confession

Rev. Dr. Bob Burns

Family of faith, we realize that a small group of energized and committed people can change the world. Mary, Zechariah, John the Baptist, are true examples. Rarely do we believe we can also be like them. We deny our abilities to make a difference. We sweep hope away placing our trust in realistic pessimism. We forget the words that Mary sings. Loving God possesses sufficient hope and grace and optimism for us all. As we encounter God in prayer, we will speak the truth of our lives, letting honesty change us. We join now in our prayers of confession, first in silence and then together.

Prayer of Confession

Rev. Dr. Bob Burns

Leader: Holy God, More days than not, hope feels like the rain.

People: We try to hold onto by it cupping it in our hands, but it trickles through our fingers.

Leader: Forgive us for holding hope so loosely.

People: Forgive us for letting the realities of today define our hopes and dreams for tomorrow. We know that this world needs people of hope, so we ask You to turn us into ones who hope enthusiastically and without ceasing.

All: Teach us how to sing Mary's song of hope to the world with open hearts! Amen.

Kyrie Eleison 572

Lord, have mercy upon us. Christ, have mercy upon us. Lord, have mercy upon us.

Assurance of Pardon

Rev. Dr. Bob Burns

Leader: Beloved Children of God, no matter how many times we let hope slip through our fingers, we still belong to God! So listen and repeat God's grace filled promises: I am God's beloved.

People: I am God's beloved.

Leader: I am forgiven.

People: I am forgiven.

Leader: I am blessed and sent to serve.

People: I am blessed and sent to serve.

All: This is the Good News of the Gospel. Thanks be to God for God's unending love. Amen.

Passing of the Peace

Rev. Dr. Bob Burns

Leader: As we are forgiven and reconciled to God through Christ Jesus, let us be reconciled to one another. The peace of the Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

* Gloria Patri 579

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Vocal Solo

"Gabriel's Message"

Daniel LaRue

Scripture Reading

Luke 1:46-55

Message

"We Sing Stories of Hope"

Rev. Dr. Ann Osborne

Responding to God's Word

Hymn #600

"Song of Mary"

Prayers of Thanksgiving, Lord's Prayer

Will Massey

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread;

and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors;

and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

Invitation to the Offering

Rev. Allison Beaulieu

Offertory

"Adagio" by Robert Schumann

Misha Fowler

* Doxology 592 (inclusive)

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise God, all creatures here below;

Praise God above, ye heavenly host; Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

Prayer of Dedication

Rev. Allison Beaulieu

Going in God's Name

* Closing Hymn #29 "Go Tell It On The Mountain"

* Charge and Benediction

Rev. Dr. Ann Osborne

* Choral Response

**Joy to the world, the Lord has come; let earth receive her King.
Let every heart prepare Him room,
And Heaven and nature sing, and Heaven and nature sing,
and Heaven and Heaven and nature sing.**

Postlude

*PLEASE STAND IN BODY OR SPIRIT

MUSIC: DR. PAUL THORLAKSON, DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

JONATHAN LEFEVER, ORGANIST

A/V: MARK ANDERSON, GUS BEAULIEU

A description of the stained Chancel window can be found in the front of the hymnal.
FM sound devices are available. Please ask an usher for your own personal receiver.

Cell Phones should be silenced during the worship service.

Video Recordings of the service can be found on the Highland website at www.HighlandPC.org

In the event of an emergency, please refer to the card in the pew racks for evacuation and re-assembly information.